

PRESIDENT BUSH ANNOUNCES USA FREEDOM CORPS

TODAY'S PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

- In his State of the Union Address, President Bush called on all Americans to serve their nation for the equivalent of two years (4,000 hours) over their lifetimes, and announced a major new citizen service initiative – the USA Freedom Corps.
- Today, the President traveled to Winston-Salem, North Carolina to outline a key component of the USA Freedom Corps – the Citizen Corps, which will enable Americans to participate directly in homeland security efforts in their own communities.

BACKGROUND ON THE USA FREEDOM CORPS

- On November 8, 2001, President Bush gave a speech in Atlanta, Georgia where he called on Americans to fight the war on terrorism by serving to improve their communities, and announced his intention to develop new ways for Americans to serve.
- In his State of the Union Address, President Bush announced his plan to launch the new USA Freedom Corps – a comprehensive, integrated citizen service initiative. The USA Freedom Corps includes three major programs:
 - ***A new Citizen Corps to engage citizens directly in improving homeland security:*** The Citizen Corps will implement a range of new initiatives to engage ordinary Americans in specific homeland security efforts in their own communities. Citizen Corps initiatives include the creation of a Medical Reserve Corps, a Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program and a Terrorist Information and Prevention System (TIPS) – as well as a doubling of the Neighborhood Watch program, and a tripling of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.
 - ***An improved and enhanced AmeriCorps and Senior Corps:*** The Administration will reform and expand the AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs to engage thousands of new volunteers in effective, community-based service opportunities. President Bush's plan will add more than 200,000 participants in community service (25,000 new AmeriCorps participants -- who will generate an additional 75,000 local volunteers -- and 100,000 new Senior Corps participants).
 - ***A strengthened Peace Corps:*** Today, enrollment in the Peace Corps is less than half the historic high level of 15,000 volunteers in 1966. To allow more Americans to demonstrate firsthand the true values of our nation to those in the developing world, the President will propose a doubling of the Peace Corps program over the next 5 years. The expanded Peace Corps program will include specific efforts targeted at rebuilding Afghanistan.
- President Bush will demonstrate his **support for this effort by requesting more than \$560 million in new funding for the USA Freedom Corps in his FY 2003 budget.** He will also ensure a high-level Administration focus on this initiative by creating a new USA Freedom Corps Council, comprised of the relevant agency heads, and also a new USA Freedom Corps Office inside the Executive Office of the President and led by an Assistant to the President. The Council and the Office will make further recommendations to the President on ways to enhance service and improve civic progress.
- For more information on the USA Freedom Corps, Americans can visit www.usafreedomcorps.gov or call 1-877-USA-CORPS

ABOUT THE CITIZEN CORPS

- The Citizen Corps will enable Americans to volunteer to participate directly in homeland security efforts in their own communities. Citizen Corps will be coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Community-based Citizen Corps Councils will help drive local involvement in Citizen Corps, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats, identifying local resources and coordinating other Citizen Corps programs.
 - These Councils will be broad-based – including leaders from law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, businesses, community-based institutions, schools, places of worship, health care facilities, public works and other key community sectors.
- **The President's budget for FY 03 will request \$144 million in matching funds to support the formation and training of local Citizen Corps Councils.**
- Citizen Corps volunteers will be able to participate in a variety of programs that match their skills and abilities. The President's FY 03 budget provides more than \$230 million for these efforts, including:
 - *Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) Program:* Builds on successful local programs in which civilian volunteers help local police departments to perform non-sworn functions, freeing up police officers to perform vital front-line duties in times of emergency.
 - *Medical Reserve Corps:* Enables retired healthcare professionals to effectively augment local health officials' capacity to respond to an emergency.
 - *Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System):* Operation TIPS will enable millions of America transportation workers, postal workers, and public utility employees to identify and report suspicious activities linked to terrorism and crime.
 - *Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT):* The President has proposed tripling over the next two years the number of Americans enrolled in CERT – a training program that enables individual Americans to participate in emergency management planning in their communities and prepare to respond to disasters and other emergencies.
 - *Neighborhood Watch Programs:* The President's plan will double the number of Neighborhood Watch Programs in the next two years, and enhance the program by incorporating terrorism prevention into its mission.
 - *Citizens' Preparedness Guidebook:* The Citizens' Preparedness Guidebook provides current crime and disaster preparedness techniques as well as the latest information on terrorism, to give Americans guidance on how to prepare in their homes, neighborhoods, workplaces and public spaces.
- For more information on Citizen Corps initiatives or to become a volunteer, Americans can visit www.citizencorps.gov or call 1-877-USA-CORPS.

For more information on the President's initiatives, visit www.whitehouse.gov